



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

Shortly after midnight on July 31, the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, our sister Pat/Patricia/Patsy peacefully entrusted herself for all eternity to the loving and gracious God to whom she had offered her liberty, her memory, and her entire will. Those who accompanied Pat during the final years of her life knew all too well that Pat not only prayed the well-known prayer of St. Ignatius, she also lived it.

Born to Anton and Lucy (Jewett) Vaira on October 5, 1931, Pat was the third of six children. Growing up in South Wilmington, Illinois, Pat understood from a young age the preciousness and fragility of life. Mindful of the childhood deaths of an older sister and brother, Pat was attuned to the importance of living each day with gratitude, generosity and joy. She was a member of St. Lawrence Parish and attended South Wilmington Elementary School. After graduating from South Wilmington High School, she began her undergraduate studies at the College of St. Francis. It was there that she first experienced the inspiration, friendliness and concern of the Joliet Franciscan Sisters who made up the faculty and the staff. Under the influence of Sister Miriam Edward (Loretta Wagner), Pat was supported in her attraction to Franciscan life and encouraged to enter the Congregation, which she did her sophomore year when she entered the Postulancy on September 4, 1950. The following August 12 she entered the Novitiate receiving the name of Sister M. Antonita. On August 12, 1953, she made First Profession of vows.

Completing a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of St. Francis and a Master of Arts degree in Business Education from Catholic University of America, Pat was a passionate advocate of Catholic education. She devoted herself to this lifelong ministry that earned her the reputation of an enthusiastic, respected and much loved teacher. Sister Patricia began her ministry in 1953 at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Columbus, Ohio, where she taught Grade Four and was the Parish Organist. From 1953 until 1957 Sister served in Parishes in Ohio. In 1957 she began a six year ministry of teaching General Business, Typing, Stenography and Bookkeeping at St. Francis Academy (now Joliet Catholic Academy) in Joliet. In 1963 her ministry took her back to Ohio where she taught at Bishop Ready High School in Columbus and St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Louisville, Ohio. In 1968 she began an almost 40 year ministry at St. Peter High School in Mansfield, Ohio. Always giving credit to Sister Margaret Duffy, her mentor, for teaching her how to teach typing, she sought to keep abreast of the changes

Alleluia!



Sister Patricia (Antonita) Vaira, OSF

and innovations in Business Machines and Office work. Skilled at combining learning with leisure, she readily took up the challenges of learning court stenography and welcomed the opportunity to move from a manual typewriter to a computer. Words from a plaque on the First floor of St. Peter's High School Room 108, (fondly known as "Sr. Pat's Room") express it best: "She adapted to every new technology that the world offered for the sake of her students. She also taught and role-modeled even more important skills. She taught us all the value of faith, the promise of hope, the meaning of love and the awesome power of God."

Characterized by her openness and availability to respond to the call to be "Sister," she always served others with a friendly smile, a gentle sense of humor and a contagious enthusiasm. While serving formally as the Congregation's General Secretary from 1972 to 1976, throughout the years, countless were the ways in which she came to the aid of those writing theses, dissertations and just about anything in need of typing, formatting and creative design. When her health began to fail, she accepted what was being asked of her in her usual quiet, unassuming way, and still found ways to continue to minister to children at St. Peter's as she was able. She could frequently be seen in the Day Care Center, holding the little ones, and then in the school cafeteria where the students affectionately gave her the title of "Cookie Lady."

In 2008, Sr. Pat returned to Joliet, where she devoted herself to the ministries of presence and prayer at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home until making her final journey home to God.

As her parting gift, at once simple and profound, Sister Pat entrusts us with the daily prayer that graced her classrooms and grounded her Franciscan life for 62 years: "Lord, direct the work of our hands."

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Sister Patricia Vaira, OSF

October 5, 1931 — July 31, 2012

<i>Born:</i>	October 5, 1931
<i>Parents:</i>	Anton and Lucy (Jewett) Vaira
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 4, 1950
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 12, 1951
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1953
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 13, 1956
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	July 31, 2012

Ministry History

1953—1954	Teacher: Grade 4, St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, Ohio
1954—1955	Teacher: Grade 5, St. Michael, Worthington, Ohio
1955—1956	Teacher: Grades 3, 4, 5, / Organist: St. John Baptist, Payne, Ohio
1956—1957	Teacher: Grade 5 / Organist: St. Michael, Worthington
1957—1963	Teacher: Junior Homeroom, Various Business Classes, Saint Francis Academy, Joliet, Illinois
1963—1967	Teacher: Various Business Classes, Department Head (64-65), Bishop Ready, Columbus
1967—1968	Teacher: Various Business Classes, Department Head, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Louisville, Ohio
1968—1972	Teacher: Various Business Classes, St. Peter High School, Mansfield, Ohio
1972—1976	General Secretary, Centerhouse, Joliet
1976—2000	Teacher: Business, St. Peter, Mansfield
2000—2008	Volunteer: St. Peter High School Day Care, Mansfield
2008—2012	Community Service: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet

<i>Wake:</i>	Friday, August 3, 2012, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Prayer Service:</i>	Friday, August 3, 2012, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Mass of Christian Burial:</i>	Friday, August 3, 2012, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Burial:</i>	Saturday, August 4, 2012, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Interment:</i>	Section 8, Lot 360, Grave 4, Resurrection Cemetery
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents Anton and Lucy (Jewett) Vaira, her sister Catherine Vaira and brothers, John and Joseph
<i>Survived by:</i>	Her sisters Charlotte Curtis (Gary) and Marilyn Mc Clennan (John) and numerous nieces and nephews

Rest in Peace, Sister Patricia